



# News

From the Office of Mayor Gregory A. Ballard

City of Indianapolis

Vol. 1 Issue 1  
December  
2008

## Mayor Announces Citywide Food Initiative

On November 7th, Mayor Greg Ballard, joined by representatives from local organizations and businesses, made a call-to-action to urge citizens to respond to the city's growing need for food donations.

Since the Mayor's call-to-action, organizations and companies from across Indianapolis have stepped up to the challenge by organizing food drives and events to get the word out and encourage everyone to give.

"This year, it's different. Our city, like the rest of the nation, is facing the challenges of an economic downturn," said Mayor Ballard. "Our community food banks are beginning to see a drop in food donations at the point when many of our neighbors are most in need.

"That's why I'm calling on every business, every school, every church, every charitable organization, every agency of government, and every citizen in Indianapolis to pack the pantries at our local food banks beginning today."



*On November 7, Mayor Ballard launched the Citywide Food Initiative.*

*The Mayor is urging everyone to help out by donating non-perishable food to local food banks.*

For more information on how you can help, please call the Mayor's Action Center at 327-4MAC or visit our web site:

[www.indygov.org/mayor](http://www.indygov.org/mayor). ●

## Neighborhood Stabilization Project Funds Bring Questions as City Seeks Solutions

With the announcement the City of Indianapolis will be receiving \$29 million to help with neighborhood stabilization, the Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) has received several phone calls from citizens wanting to know about the program.

The funds are designed to deal with properties that have already gone through the foreclosure process. According to HUD guidelines the funds have to be targeted to areas of greatest need. The city has identified 11 neighborhoods which can be viewed along with the plan at the city's website:

<http://www.indygov.org/eGov/City/DMD/Community/home.htm>

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## NSP Funds

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Public comment is being sought on just how and where the funds will be spent.

Additionally, a committee of public, private and non-profit community leaders is meeting to help make the decision.

In order to get the most bang for the buck, areas that could levy other investments from the private sector will be given a closer look.

DMD will have an announcement on how the funds will be used in late January.

"Tough decisions have to be made," said Mayor Greg Ballard. "Funds can be used to get rid of blight and abandoned homes, which will be a big part of the mix. But the overall goal of the city is to get the properties back into shape so they can be placed back on the tax rolls." ●

## Chip in at "The Box"

It is no secret there are people in our city who do not have a place to live and cannot afford to purchase clothing suitable for spending evenings on the streets.

Additionally, our city faces a growing population of panhandlers, who station themselves on street corners and medians and ask for money.

The majority of panhandlers are not in crisis, but are



*Indy's dual campaign to aid city's homelessness and address panhandling was launched in May 2008.*

instead looking for quick cash.

In an effort to combat these problems head-on, the City of Indianapolis installed five curb vaults in the downtown area known as "The Boxes." The concept is a simple one...instead of giving money to a panhandler, give that money to "The Box."

Through "The Boxes" campaign, the city ensures that loose change or bills dropped into "The Box" will be put to good use.

The money from the boxes goes directly to the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP) to be used by agencies that provide services to individuals and families who truly deserve it.

Since their installation, "The Boxes" have collected more than \$4,000.

The first distribution of

funds collected from "The Boxes" was made by CHIP on September 3, 2008.

The funds were distributed to address the immediate health and safety needs of our city's homeless with the additional goal of engaging them in services to move them off the streets and into safe and affordable housing. More specifically, the funds were used to purchase items including hats, gloves, winter coats, blankets, non-perishable food and bottled water, to support the work of outreach teams from seven agencies including the Homeless Initiative Program, HVAF of Indiana, the Homeless Resource Team of Midtown Community Mental Health Center, Pourhouse, Inc., Tear Down the Walls Ministries, The Indy Dream Center, and Centered by Christ. Three additional boxes will be installed in 2009. ●

### "The Boxes" are currently located at:

- Southwest corner of the Circle (near South Bend Chocolate Co.)
- Southeast corner of Washington and Illinois
- Northwest corner of Meridian and Maryland
- Southwest corner of Illinois and Market
- Northeast corner of Pennsylvania and Ohio

## Mayor, Indy Parks Dedicate Country's Longest Fiberglass Bridge



*On November 14th the Mayor and Indy Parks dedicated the country's longest fiberglass bridge, which runs across Crooked Creek on the city's Northwestside.*

Visitors to Juan Solomon Park on the city's Northwestside can cross from one side of Crooked Creek to the other, thanks to a fiberglass bridge secured through a private-public partnership by the Indianapolis Parks Foundation.

Fox Hill Elementary School students traveled to the park on a field trip Nov. 14th to learn about native plant and animal species, including a live red-shouldered hawk. At the dedication of the longest fiberglass pedestrian

bridge in the country - and the world's third-longest - they learned about its significance and the importance of philanthropy.

When the original bridge washed out seven years ago, the city had to find the funds to get a new bridge built. The Indianapolis Parks Foundation worked with several private partners and the Crooked Creek Community Council to make that happen.

The \$50,000 bridge was purchased through a grant from the Efroymson Family Fund, a CICF fund and area community groups.

Partners making significant in-kind contributions to the project totaling nearly \$120,000 included The Schneider Corporation, Bowen Engineering, Laura Kopetsky Tri-Ax, ThyssenKrupp Safeway, Midwest Concrete Pumping and Baja Concrete.

The fiberglass bridge cost about \$40,000 less to build than a steel structure, and Indy Parks preserved the eco-system around the creek because installation of the bridge required little removal of brush and trees.

"Things like this just don't happen by themselves," said Mayor Greg Ballard. "We have very strong public-private partnerships that made the vision of this bridge a reality. It highlights the extraordinary work that can be done when community organizations and other partners come together."

For more information visit: [www.indygov.org/parks](http://www.indygov.org/parks) ●

## Green Light for Greenways Indy Parks Breaks Ground On Pennsy Trail

Residents of Marion County's Eastside cheered in approval as city and state officials broke ground on the much-anticipated Pennsy Trail.

"We've all been waiting a long time for this day," Tim Ehergott, president and founder of Irvington Community School, said at the official groundbreaking held at the school Nov. 13, 2008.

A full assembly of the elementary school's students and other Irvington residents attended the groundbreaking. Department of

Natural Resources Deputy Director Charlie White presented Mayor Greg Ballard a check for \$90,000, representing the grant awarded by Gov. Mitch Daniels to create a 1.2-mile stretch of the Pennsy Trail. City-County Councilman Ben Hunter and Indy Parks & Recreation Director Stuart Lowry also participated in the event.

The groundbreaking set in motion development of the Pennsy Trail. Upon completion, it will help reshape the Eastside of Indianapolis and redefine how citizens interact with other parts of Marion County, the town of Cumberland and eventually Hancock County.

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## Pennsy Trail

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“Gov. Daniels, realizing the impact that trails have in a community both in terms of environmental sustainability and on the recreational and commuting needs on its residents, awarded this grant to the City of Indianapolis as part of his \$19 million state trails initiative,” said Mayor Ballard.

The trail is critical in connectivity of the Eastside for pedestrians and bicyclists. It will connect historic Irvington to the Far-Eastside commercial district along Washington Street and significant destinations including the Irvington Community School and the Ransburg YMCA.

The project will assist in meeting the immediate need for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to improve quality of life for Eastside residents. ●



Mayor Ballard talks with students from Irvington Community School. Construction on the Pennsy Trail is expected to wrap up with a grand opening in Fall 2009.

## On-Street Bike Lanes Are On Their Way



The city's first major on-street bike lanes project began in October 2008.

Great news for bicycle enthusiasts! The city's first on-street bike lanes are

currently under construction on New York and Michigan Streets and should be complete by mid-December.

The New York and Michigan Street bike lanes are the first phase of a 15-year plan to bring 200 miles of bike lanes to the county. This first phase of the bike lanes project extends from Arlington Avenue on the east to White River Parkway on the west and will include the addition of signage, bike lane markings, bike lane pavement symbols and re-stripping of the traffic lanes on New York and Michigan Streets.

Hundreds of people from the bicycle community came out for the kick-off event in October, where Mayor Greg

Ballard announced the city's intention to become a "bicycle-friendly city."

"Indianapolis has long been known as the "Crossroads of America" – now those roads are going to include bike lanes and we are going to embrace alternative modes of transportation," said Mayor Ballard.

More bike lanes will be added next year when Allisonville Road, from 82<sup>nd</sup> Street to Fall Creek Parkway, will be revamped to add bike lanes on the roadway shoulders.

The bike lanes project addresses Mayor Ballard's focus on green initiatives

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## Bike Lanes

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and offers the citizens of Indianapolis additional transportation choices.

The project also enhances access to jobs and other key destinations around town via the IndyGo bus system.

Every bus has a bike rack, which provides greater connectivity options throughout Indianapolis.

Becoming a bicycle/pedestrian-friendly community is an economic development investment and another way to make the city more attractive and competitive. ●

### DPW gets creative in preparation for Winter



*With an aging fleet, DPW is using innovative thinking to cost effectively maximize its resources in preparation for the 2008-2009 snow season.*

The Department of Public Works (DPW) has been working since early this year to prepare for the upcoming 2008-2009 winter season.

With about 90 available trucks in the city's fleet, properly preparing and equipping the fleet to battle imminent ice and snow has been a challenge.

With an aging fleet and funding concerns, the task has even appeared daunting at times. DPW anticipates adding 13 new trucks to the fleet in the spring of 2009; a welcome addition, but too late to affect the upcoming snow season.

Thanks to innovative thinking, however, DPW has met the challenge. A maximum of 10 trucks will be retrofitted with salt spreaders to better accommodate this season's snow fleet.

The uniquely innovative trucks will not extend the life of the vehicles, but the

creative design allows the city to cost effectively maximize its resources. DPW Director David Sherman constantly encourages staff to think outside the box.

"Over 50 percent of our fleet should have been retired long ago," said Director Sherman. "Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our fleet services team, we've been able to keep the trucks running and our residents safe.

However, due to the rusted condition of the beds and framing of several of the vehicles, and our limited budget, we knew we needed to come up with a better solution."

After inspecting the new vehicle, David Dingess of Omaha Standard commented:

"This truck should serve as an example of how frugal the City of Indianapolis is due to the fact that this unit will serve the people and get the job done for a while longer as far as the snow and ice equipment goes." ●

# Early Readers Club

*Helps Prepare Children for the Future*



On October 2nd, Mayor Greg Ballard joined other adults in Indianapolis, and leaders across the nation, in reading with children as part of Jumpstart's Read for the Record 2008 campaign.

Throughout the day, Mayor Ballard and members of his staff read *Corduroy* by Don Freeman to students at St. Mary's Child Center (SMCC).

With the holidays just around the corner, some of you may be looking for gift ideas.

For a holiday, a birthday or for no particular occasion at all, books are a wonderful gift and a wise investment in the future of our children and our community.

A locally-grown reading program, United Way of Central Indiana's *Early Readers Club*, helps families prepare their young children for school and encourages parents and caregivers to read to their child by building home libraries.

Through *Early Readers Club*, families can register to receive 12 high-quality children's books each year until the child's sixth birthday, providing countless opportunities for kids and parents to read together.

For more information and to begin receiving quality books which you can read with your child, please visit

<http://www.uwci.org/index.asp?p=650>. ●

## Consider these facts:

Experts suggest young children should be read to on a regular basis for 20-30 minutes per day, but only about half of Indiana's families read to their children regularly.

Until the third grade, children are learning to read. After that, they must be able to read in order to learn.

The number of books in a home is a strong indicator of a child's future reading ability, setting him/her on track for success in school and in life.



# Save-Learn-Earn

## Indy's Campaign for Financial Fitness

Save-Learn-Earn: Indy's Campaign for Financial Fitness was announced in October 2008 and is scheduled to launch in January 2009. The campaign focuses on getting financial education information and tax-prep services to low and moderate income families throughout Marion County.

More specifically, the campaign is a collaboration among community stakeholders to provide free tax preparation to those who qualify for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), financial fitness coaching during tax season, and continued financial fitness education throughout 2009.

Earlier this month the campaign learned they will receive a \$105,000 boost in funding through a grant provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as part of the agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

"This grant is significant, because it will increase the impact of contributions received to-date, and because it will ease the financial burden on our community centers that provide

## Volunteers Needed!

This year, 10 tax sites will be available to help accommodate Hoosiers throughout Marion County. This year's goal is to serve 9,000 individuals.

There are plenty of opportunities to help.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, visit United Way of Central Indiana's Web site and register today.

[www.uwci.org/volunteer](http://www.uwci.org/volunteer)

Choose the schedule and location that best fits your needs. Each volunteer is asked to make a commitment in four-hour increments on a weekly basis throughout the tax season. Free training will be provided for all volunteers.

much-needed financial fitness education in our city," said Indianapolis First Lady Winnie Ballard. ●



On October 28, Mayor Greg Ballard, Winnie Ballard, Harry McFarland of the Central Indiana Community Foundation, Ellen K. Annala of United Way of Central Indiana and representatives of community organizations throughout Indianapolis kicked off Indy's Campaign for Financial Fitness.

## Calendar of Events/Meetings • December 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1</p> <p>NESCO Community Policing Committee 5:30 p.m. 57 N. Rural St.</p> <p>Cottage Home Neighborhood Assoc. Mtg. 6:00 p.m. 1011 E. St. Clair</p> <p>Mayor and Delegates in China</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Near Eastside Collaborative Taskforce Mtg. 6:00 p.m. 57 N. Rural St.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>JW Marriott Business Opportunities (MBE/WBE) 1—4 p.m. 4646 N. Michigan</p> <p>Garfield Park Arts Center Open House 6—7:30 p.m. Garfield Park</p> <p>IMPD Task Force Mtg. 6-7 p.m. IMPD NW HQ</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Public Meeting on Sewer Rates 6:30—8 p.m. Brookside Park</p> <p>Eagledale Neighborhood Assoc. Mtg. 6- 8p.m. AmVets Post 99</p> <p>Brookside Neighborhood Assoc. Mtg. 6:30 p.m. School 54</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Santa on the Square 10 a.m. Fountain Square</p> <p>Holiday “Hoop-it-up” 9:00 a.m. (Lunch a 1:00 p.m.) Washington Com. School</p>
7	<p>8</p> <p>St. Clair Place Neighborhood Mtg. 6:30 p.m. 2327 E. 10th St.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Public Meeting on Sewer Rates 6:30—8 p.m. Julia M. Carson Government Center</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Pike Township Residents Assoc. Mtg. 7 p.m. Pike Township Government Center</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Public Meeting on Sewer Rates 6:30—8 p.m. Garfield Park</p> <p>IMPD Task Force Mtg. 5:30 p.m. IMPD SE HQ</p> <p>Indy Neighborhood Resource Center Holiday Open House 5:30 p.m. 1802 N. Illinois</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Breakfast with Santa <i>Times and Locations:</i> 8:30 a.m. IMPD SE HQ</p> <p>8:30 a.m.—10:30 a.m. Shepherd Com. Center</p> <p>9:00 a.m. Washington Com. School</p> <p>9 a.m.—Noon J.S. Reutz Café</p>
<p>14</p> <p>McMiracle on 38th Street 4 p.m. State Fairgrounds</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Butler Tarkington Neighborhood Mtg. 7:00 p.m. MLK Multi Service Center</p>	<p>16</p> <p>CSO Budget Review 5-7 p.m. Location TBD</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Eagledale Lafayette Square Area Coalition (ELSA) Committee Mtg. 6:30—8 p.m. IMPD NW HQ</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Windsor Village Park Family Center Grand Opening 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Windsor Village Park</p> <p>Give it All You Got Tournament 5—9 p.m. Sports of All Sorts</p>
21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27
28	29	<p>30</p> <p>Farhill Downs Neighborhood Assoc. Mtg. 7 p.m. IFD Station 54</p>	<p>31</p> <p>New Year's Eve</p>	<p>This calendar represents a general compilation of community events/meetings. To learn more about meetings in your specific neighborhood, please visit <a href="http://www.indygov.org/neighborhoods">www.indygov.org/neighborhoods</a> to find contact information for your neighborhood liaison.</p>		

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